

## CITY / TOWN CANCER INCIDENCE, 1994 - 1998

### Content

Each city and town in Massachusetts is listed alphabetically in the **TABLES** section. The expected number of cases, the observed number of cases, and standardized incidence ratios are presented for twenty-three types of cancer and for all cancers combined.

Next to the number of observed cases for each cancer type in a city/town is the corresponding SIR. Any SIR value that is not followed by a symbol described below is not statistically significant at the levels of significance testing used in this report.

A pound symbol ( # ) following an SIR value indicates that this cancer incidence excess (#+) or deficit (#-) is statistically significant at the  $p \leq 0.05$  level.

A tilde symbol ( ~ ) following an SIR indicates that this cancer excess (~+) or deficit (~-) is statistically significant at the  $p \leq 0.01$  level.

A caret symbol ( ^ ) following an SIR indicates that this cancer excess (^+) or deficit (^-) is statistically significant at the  $p \leq 0.001$  level.

(See *Measures of Statistical Significance* in the **METHODS** section for a detailed discussion of the significance testing used in this report.)

Whenever the number of observed cases was less than five, the corresponding SIR was neither calculated nor tested for statistical significance; this is indicated with an SIR of "not calculated" followed by an asterisk (NC\*). The number of observed and expected cases *is* shown in these circumstances.

### Interpretation of the Data

*The information contained in this report and in the data tables does not provide proof of the association of individual risk factors with cancer excesses, but rather should be used as a guide for further surveillance, epidemiologic investigations, and other public health activities.*

When reviewing the data tables, it is important to keep in mind that an SIR compares the observed cancer incidence in a particular community with the expected incidence based on statewide average age-specific incidence rates. This means that *valid comparisons can only be made between a community and the state as a whole. SIRs for different cities and towns CANNOT and SHOULD NOT be compared to each other.* (Comparisons between two communities would be valid only if there were no differences in the age and sex distributions of the two communities' populations.)